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APRIL 29, 1965

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Police burst into flat, seize him and his wife

Evening Standard Reporter: Moscow, Thursday

Twenty-six-year-old London teacher
Mr. Gerald Brooke, at present cooling his heels in Moscow's Lubyanka Jail, is being held on charges of disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda. This could keep him behind Soviet bars for three years if the Russians go through with the case.

Mr. Brooke, 6ft. tall and broad-shouldered, lives at Finchley and is a full-time lecturer in Russian at the Holborn College of Law, Language and Commerce.

He arrived in Moscow on April 18 with his 25-year-old wife Barbara as leader of a party of 30 student teachers from the college.

It was a private trip he had organised himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Brooke, who had attempted to meet Russians for language practice, were visiting Russian friends on Monday when Soviet police broke into the apartment and arrested them both. Mrs. Brooke was released on Tuesday morning.

'Subversive activities'

Early today the Soviet Foreign Ministry confirmed the arrest and said a criminal charge had been lodged against Mr. Brooke.

For several hours Britain was without any further information about the nature of the charge.

Then this afternoon a British Foreign Office spokesman in London said the Russians had referred to Mr.

Brooke's "alleged involvement in subversive activities."

The charge against Mr. Brooke is understood to relate to handing out of anti-Soviet propaganda in the form of printed leaflets.

Mrs. Brooke, a librarian, is staying with the British Consul, Miss Agnes Wood. An embassy spokesman said she was "very distressed" at her husband's arrest and reporters were asked not to disturb her.

British officials are anxious to know if and when Mr. Brooke is to appear before a court and if he can have legal representation.

Miss Wood is expected to see Mr. Brooke this afternoon. His wife is also to see her husband today.

The trial is expected to start within the next few days, according to well-informed Russians.

Mr. Brooke has been compiling a crash Russian language course.

Most of the members of his tour party are taking a year's course in Russian and had come to improve their fluency.

They are due to leave Moscow by train tomorrow morning, arriving in London on Sunday evening.